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#### POSTPAID MOBILE PHONE SUBSCRIPTIONS IN OMAN RISE

Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that post-paid mobile phone subscriptions in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 11.7 percent by the end of November 2023 (compared to the corresponding period in 2022) and stood at 1,786,671. The number of paid mobile phone subscriptions also increased by 2 percent to 5,254,832. **>A5**



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**Sayyid Theyazin  
meets Bahrain  
Crown Prince**

**A2**

TOGETHER FORWARD

## Council of Ministers announces Forum on Government-Society Communication

**MUSCAT:** The Secretariat General of the Council of Ministers yesterday announced the start of registration for a forum codenamed "Together Forward". The forum will see the launch of "Idea Makers" initiative, which seeks to encourage innovation and creative thinking in developing themes of national identity and communication between the government and society.

Those interested to register are advised to view the terms and conditions through the forum's website, via the link <https://togetherfwd.om>. **-ONA**



# 'WE SURVIVED ISRAELI BOMBING BY CHANGING LOCATIONS IN GAZA STRIP'

Oman evacuates citizens from Gaza, thanks Egypt for help

*Times News Service*

**MUSCAT:** Lucky to survive the Israeli bombings, the seven people rescued from Gaza and brought to Oman, narrated their sordid saga of escape.

They were able to survive by changing locations frequently and finally got a safety valve of the Rafah border crossing through which they escaped into Egypt and saved their lives.

In an exclusive interview with *Times of Oman*, Seema Basher, a mother of three children, spoke about the conditions she encountered due to the war in Gaza.

Seema, an Omani woman,



**SEEMA BASHER**



married to a Palestinian, living in Gaza for the last 13 years, said: "We lived in Al-Rimal neighbourhood in Gaza, and our house was destroyed on the very third day of the war. We were forced to move from one house to another throughout the 90 days of our ordeal, until our escape."

She also said that their dreams

were shattered with the bombing of their house. "Years of hard work turned into ruins in seconds," she said.

The Oman Embassy in Cairo announced on Monday that they were able to evacuate Omani nationals from Gaza Strip in coordination with the Egyptian Foreign Ministry, and the family of five arrived safely in the Sultanate.

Elaborating on her hardships, the 31-year-old Seema, mother of Youssef, 12 years old, Jana, five years old, and Rakan, four years old, said: "We were short of basic needs like food, water, and medicines. Also, the potable water had become scarce, and we received it with great difficulty. We also suffered due to high prices of food products, and got only canned goods. Besides, humanitarian aid was not reaching us on time."

When asked about the availability of medicines, she said the situation was worse and most of the pharmacies were almost empty with medicines available only in hospitals to treat the injured

and the sick. Even the hospitals were running out of stocks.

Seema also mentioned that her mother-in-law suffers from chronic diseases.

In an effort to save her family, Seema contacted the Oman's Embassy in Ramallah, which directed her to contact the Omani Embassy in Cairo.

#### Safely evacuated

Finally, with the coordination of both the embassies, me and my family, were safely evacuated from Gaza through the Rafah land crossing. Seema also extended her special thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Foreign Ministry, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Palestine, Salem Al-Amiri, and Sultanate's Ambassador to Egypt Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Rahbi.

She also took the opportunity to express her thanks to the second secretary, Mahfuza bint Muhammad Al-Ghazili, and the staff at the two embassies for their co-operation with her family in helping them get out of the war zone.



## PLANS TO MAKE OMAN A GATEWAY FOR SPACE SERVICES, APPLICATIONS

The Middle East Space Conference 2024 kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday under the auspices of HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said. The conference, which seeks to achieve the vision, objectives of Oman's space programme, will highlight investment opportunities in Oman as a regional gateway for space services and applications. **See also >A4**



**Oman LNG** is honoured to congratulate **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** and the people of Oman on the anniversary of His Majesty's Accession to the Throne. May Allah the Almighty protect His Majesty and guide him to the renewed renaissance and bring Oman further progress and prosperity.



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PRAYER  
TIMINGS

Dhuhr.....12:19pm  
Asr.....3:21pm  
Maghrib.....5:42pm  
Isha.....6:56pm  
Fajr (Tomorrow).....5:31am

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MEETING

EXCHANGE EXPERTISE

## Sayyid Theyazin reviews ties with Bahrain Crown Prince



**MANAMA:** HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham Al Said held a meeting on Monday with Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain at Al Qudai-biya Palace in Manama.

During the meeting, HH Sayyid Theyazin and Prince Salman reviewed relations between the Sul-

tanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain, as well as means of upgrading cooperation in various fields. They also discussed other matters of common concern.

The meeting was attended by Sheikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the King's Representative for Humanitarian Works and Youth Affairs, Sheikh Isa bin Salman Al

Khalifa, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Isa bin Salman Education Charitable Trust, Chairman of Bahrain Labour Fund, Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Salman bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Minister of Finance and National Economy and several senior Bahraini officials. -ONA



## OHRC, Qatari counterpart review joint cooperation

**DOHA:** Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and its Qatari counterpart reviewed areas of joint cooperation within the framework of mutual coordination on the regional and international levels.

The two sides also exchanged expertise and best practices in matters related to human rights,

among other topics.

This came during the visit of OHRC's delegation, headed by Dr. Rashid Hamad Al Balushi, Chairman of the OHRC to Qatar.

Moreover, the delegation was introduced to the regulations of the Qatari commission and its structure, as well as the methodology of choosing its members.

Meanwhile, the delegation met with Sultan Hassan Al Jamali, as the Executive Director of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions. During this meeting, the two sides highlighted areas of cooperation. They also discussed the matter of organising workshops and training sessions in Oman. -ONA

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## TECHNO PLASTIC INDUSTRY SAOC AND OMAN NATIONAL TRANSPORT COMPANY (MWASALAT) FORGE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR ENHANCED COLLABORATION



Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** In a significant stride towards bolstering commercial cooperation and community service, Techno Plastic Industry SAOC (Techno), specialising in the manufacturing of plastic pipes, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Oman National Transport Company (Mwasalat), a leading company in public transportation in Oman.

The objective is to realise mutual benefits, strengthen promotional activities, and enhance community service.

Omar bin Sulaiman Al-Bahri, the General Manager of Commercial Affairs at Techno Plastic Industry, said, "The solid foundations of our company, built upon a primary commitment to community service and subsequently its business objectives, find completeness only with the presence of a strategic partner aligned with the same strategies that contribute to accomplishing the mission effectively."

Badar bin Mohammed Al Nadabi, the CEO of Mwasalat, said: "We



at Mwasalat appreciate partnerships that contribute to a stronger and more sustainable community and our collaboration with Techno goes beyond social responsibility – it's a reflection of our commitment to the community we serve. This partnership fills us with excitement for the positive outcomes we anticipate."

"Our dedication is unwavering in ensuring the success of this ven-

ture. Through this, we aim to fulfill Oman Vision 2040's objectives, enhancing community values and paving the way for a sustainable business environment," he further added.

This agreement between the two entities emanates from the noble guidance of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik towards societal cohesion and achieving sustainable development in the private sector,

in line with Vision 2040.

In light of this collaboration, the signing of the joint MoU reflects the commitment of both parties to enhance trade relations and contribute to building a more cohesive and interactive society.

This development is regarded as a positive signal towards supporting community initiatives and reinforcing the sustainable vision of both organisations.

31ST EDITION



## Winners of Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran contest honoured

**MUSCAT:** Assigned by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sheikh Salim bin Mustahail Al Ma'ashani, Advisor at the Diwan of Royal Court honoured winners of the 31st version of Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran Competition.

The honouring ceremony took place at the Lecture Hall at Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque here today.

As many as (1,638) male and female contestants took part in the current version that it included 7 levels. The chief guest hon-

oured the top three winners in each level. He also honoured the Jury Committee and participants from the disabled category.

The Sultan Qaboos Holy Quran Competition aims to urge Omanis to memorise the Holy Quran, to follow its approach and the guidance of its teachings and to raise a generation keen on reciting the Holy Quran, in addition to enhancing the presence of the Sultanate of Oman in the international Holy Quran competitions.

-ONA



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# Forum focuses on negative effects of social media

The forum also seeks ways to maximise benefits from the positive aspects of such sites in a manner that serves families and consolidates the concepts of national identity, citizenship and humanity

**MUSCAT:** Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) is organising the 3rd edition of a forum titled "Parental Upbringing as a Measure to Counter the Impact of Social Media". The two-day forum kicked off on Monday under the auspices of Dr. Abdullah Nasser Al Harrasi, Minister of Information.

As many as 140 researchers from inside and abroad are taking part in the forum, which focuses

on the growing negative influence of social media platforms.

The forum also seeks ways to maximise benefits from the positive aspects of such sites in a manner that serves families and consolidates the concepts of national identity, citizenship and humanity.

The forum saw the launch of the UNESCO Chair in Educational Psychology, a research

chair supported by Sultan Qaboos University. The Chair aims to advance research and its applications in cooperation with the National Commission for Education, Culture and Sciences and the UNESCO.

The forum includes more than 130 research papers and about 10 themes that evolve around parental upbringing and the role of the Islamic value system in shaping behaviour, notably to address the challenges of social media.

**Electronic blackmail**

The forum looks into the personal motives of social media users, electronic blackmail and safe electronic programmes and applications that can benefit people, children and youth. It also underscores the role of teachers, psychologists and social workers in developing skills for dealing with social media.

-ONA



FROM 12 JANUARY TO 10 FEBRUARY



## Oman's football team arrives in Doha to participate in AFC Asian Cup

**DOHA:** Oman's national football team arrived in Doha, Qatar, to participate in the AFC Asian Cup 2023 during the period from 12 January to 10 February 2024.

The national team will commence its training this evening in Doha under the leadership of Croatian coach Branko Ivankovic.

Further, the national team will play among the 6th group which

constitutes the national teams of Saudi Arabia, Kyrgyzstan and Thailand.

The red team's first match will be played against its Saudi counterpart on 16 January in Khalifa International Stadium, followed by a match against Thailand on 21 January in the same venue and a game against Kyrgyzstan on 25th January.

- ONA

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# Plans to make Oman a gateway for space services, applications

The space programme envisages the launch of a satellite in 2025 for close observation of the Earth through low-orbit satellites, said the minister

Times News Service

**MUSCAT:** The Middle East Space Conference 2024 kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday under the auspices of HH Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham Al Said.

The conference, which seeks to achieve the vision, objectives of Oman's space programme, will highlight investment opportunities in Oman as a regional gateway for space services and applications.

Eng. Said Hamoud Al Ma'awali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said that the conference constitutes a step forward in Oman's policy of economic diversification.

The minister told reporters that the programme envisages the launch of a satellite in 2025 and other programmes for close observation of the Earth through low-orbit satellites. The programme includes the development of related applications via satellites, said Al Ma'awali, noting that incubators for start-ups in the space field will be launched in 2024 or 2025.

The gathering brings together 400 experts and executives in the space sector from government departments and private sector firms from the Sultanate of Oman and abroad.

Seventy speakers will elaborate on a wide spectrum of issues during the three-day event hosted by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, in cooperation with Euroconsult.

On the sidelines of the conference, an investment agreement was signed by National Satellite Services Company and Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel) to inaugurate a company specialised in space services (codenamed "Itlaaq") whose headquarters will be in the city of Al Duqm.

The agreement was signed by HH Sayyid Azzan Qais Al Said, Chairman of the National Satellite Services Company's Board of Directors and Talal Said Al Ma'amari, CEO of Oman Telecommunications Company (Omantel).

An exhibition held on the sidelines of the conference showcased the products of 25 local and international companies specialised in space technologies and sciences.

The exhibition aims at bringing together providers and users of space services and technologies to exchange experiences and build effective partnerships and supply chains. It also helps attract investment opportunities and spread awareness about the progress made in space sector industry technologies. -**WTH DNA Inputs**



## MEETINGS

# Jordanian military delegation visits National Defence College



**MUSCAT:** The delegation of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College (RJCS) led by Brigadier Sami Mohammed Al Harbi, yesterday visited the National Defence College (NDC) at the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies in Bait Al Falaj Garrison.

The guests were greeted by Rear Admiral Ali Abdullah Al Shidi, NDC Commandant.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed a range of topics of common interest, especially in academic and training fields.

Members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the college's facilities. They also toured the NDC's departments.

Meanwhile Maj. Gen. Hamid Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies received the delegation of the Royal Jordanian Command and Staff College led by Brigadier Sami Mohammed Al Harbi. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on several academic and training matters of mutual interest. -**DNA**





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# Postpaid mobile phone subscriptions in Oman up by 11.7%



The number of paid mobile phone subscriptions also increased by 2 percent to 5,254,832, NCSI data reveals

**MUSCAT:** Data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) showed that post-paid mobile phone subscriptions in the Sultanate of Oman grew by 11.7 percent at 1,786,671 by the end of November 2023 compared to the corresponding

period in 2022. The number of paid mobile phone subscriptions also increased by 2 percent to 5,254,832. These include 3,974,544 subscriptions from operators, and 1,280,288 subscriptions from resale, which constituted a 4.3 percent increase in the total number of mobile phone subscriptions at the end of November 2023. The number of active mobile broadband subscriptions registered a rise of 4.5 percent at the end of November 2023, while subscriptions to fixed internet service grew by 6.2 percent to 564,467 at the end of November 2023. Total subscriptions to fixed broadband service (more than 256 KB/s) stood at 562,742 by the end of November 2023, an increase of 6.2 percent, while the number of subscriptions to low-

speed Internet (less than 256 KB/s) went down by 0.1 percent to 1,725. Statistics show that the number of fixed-line telephone subscriptions rose by 4.8 per cent by the end of November 2023 to 582,348. Analogue fixed-line telephone subscriptions went down by 4.6 percent by the end of November 2023 to 227,312. The number of fixed-line telephone subscriptions connected via Internet Protocol Technology increased by 14.3 percent to 297,445. By the end of November 2023, Muscat topped the list of governorates in terms of analogue fixed telephone lines (67.7 percent), followed by Dhofar Governorate (7.9 percent) North Al Batinah Governorate (7.5 percent) and other governorates (16.9 percent). — **ONA**

## Tanzanian delegation briefed about role of police academy



**NIZWA:** Camillus Mongoso Wambura, Inspector General of Police Force of the United Republic of Tanzania and his accompanying delegation on Monday visited the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences in the Wilayat of Nizwa, the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah. During the visit, the guest was briefed on the tasks, specialisations and role of the Police College and the various institutes in the academy.

**Grooming human cadres** They were also oriented with the role of the academy in grooming human cadres at the Royal Oman Police (ROP). The guests were also familiarised with the different training programmes offered by the



academy. Moreover, the guest and his accompanying delegation visited the police command in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah and the Police Station of Al Jabal

Al Akhdar (or the Green Mountain). During this visit, the guest viewed a live demonstration of some of the skills in preparing Special Tasks police personnel. — **ONA**

# 13th Year Remembrance



**Theresa Johar**  
28th July, 1951 – 9th January, 2011



In Loving Memory;  
**Arun Johar**  
Sonia, Paul and Emily Waters

Your life was a blessing,  
Your memory a treasure .  
You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure



## Ministry of Social Development

### Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of Ministry of Social Development hereby announces the following tender :-

| Tender No. | Tender Subject                                                                                | Grade                                                                                                                                                   | Last date for obtainment of tender document | Last date for tender submission | Tender Document Price (non-retundable) |                 |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
|            |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                         |                                             |                                 | small and Medium companies             | local companies |
| 512/2023   | Maintenance work for Al-Wafa Center for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in Mirbat | Companies specialized in the field of Urban contracting and maintenance registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first degree | friday 26-1-2024 02:00 PM                   | Thursady 15-2-2024 10:00 AM     | 10 R.O                                 | 25 R.O          |

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) , On Monday 08/01 /2024 .

❖ For Inquiry , please contact though the e-tendering website ([reg@tenderboard.gov.om](mailto:reg@tenderboard.gov.om)) tel. ( 24402200)

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry "

[www.mosd.gov.om](http://www.mosd.gov.om)



# US launches first moon lander in over 50 years

The Pittsburgh-based private space robotics firm aims to be the first private company to land a craft on the moon

**FLORIDA:** The first US-based spacecraft to attempt a moon landing in more than half a century blasted off in the predawn hours on Monday morning from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

The “Vulcan” rocket, built by Boeing and Lockheed Martin’s “United Launch Alliance” (ULA), lifted off from the space station at 2:18 a.m. (718 GMT). On board the rocket is Astrobotic Technology’s lunar lander, “Peregrine.”

The Pittsburgh-based private space robotics firm aims to be the first private company to land a craft on the moon.

**Flight was stable**

“Everything looks just spot on, just perfect,” Eric Monda, a ULA mission official, said from the company’s launch control room after Vulcan lifted off for the first time. Some 30 minutes into lift-off, ULA said on social media that the flight was stable as it orbited

around the Earth in the first part of the journey.

“Half-way through this coast period, Centaur systems remain stable as it coasts in Earth orbit, headed to a precise point in space above the Indian Ocean where the second engine firing is planned.”

Soon after, the rocket’s engines ignited again, “to climb from its initial parking orbit into a trans-lunar injection orbit for the Moon-bound Peregrine lander,” ULA tweeted. — **dw**



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WITH SAUDI ARABIA

## India signs Bilateral Haj Agreement 2024

**NEW DELHI:** Union Minister for Women and Child Development and Minority Affairs, Smriti Irani, accompanied by Minister of State for External Affairs, V Muraleedharan, signed the Bilateral Haj Agreement 2024 with Saudi Arabia’s Minister for Hajj and Umrah Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah in Jeddah.

A total quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims from India has been finalised for Haj 2024, with 1,40,020 seats reserved for pilgrims to proceed through the Haj Committee of India.

Moreover, this will greatly benefit the common first-time pilgrims intending to undertake the Haj pilgrimage in 2024, whereas

35,005 pilgrims would be permitted to proceed through Haj Group Operators.

**Digital initiatives**

During the meeting with the Minister of Hajj and Umrah, the digital initiatives of the Indian government in facilitating and promoting ease and convenience for the Indian Haj pilgrims by providing last-mile information to the pilgrims were greatly appreciated by Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, “they offered to extend all possible help in this regard,” according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

— **ANI**

NATIONAL ELECTION

## Sheikh Hasina re-elected for fifth term in Bangladesh

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won the re-election for a fifth term in the national election that were conducted on Sunday amidst the boycott by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) led by former PM Khaleda Zia, who is currently in jail.

Sheikh Hasina’s party Awami League has won a fourth consecutive term in the 12th parliamentary election, marking the second lowest voter turnout since the reinstatement of democracy in 1991, according to the Daily Star. Bangladesh media reported that Awami League has won the polls but the official confirmation by the country’s Election Commission is still awaited. The Awami League party hailed a significant victory for the fourth straight term, with Sheikh Hasina returning to power despite the ongoing anti-election activities by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), as reported by the Dhaka Tribune.

The landslide victory that the AL helped itself win in yesterday’s polls means Sheikh Hasina will further tighten her grip on power as she is poised to go in history as the longest serving prime minister in Bangladesh, according to the Daily Star.

Notably, the Awami League won in five constituencies amid a boycott by the opposition BNP and 15 other parties.

Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina has instructed her party leaders, workers and supporters not to hold any victory procession following the announcement of the results of the 12th general election, Dhaka Tribune reported.

PM Sheikh Hasina and Awami League president has won the Gopalganj-3 constituency almost



unopposed in a landslide victory bagging 2,49,962 votes in Sunday’s 12th general election. The total number of seats in this constituency is 108.

Earlier in the day, Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader expressed confidence that the Boat would emerge victorious in this election, the Dhaka Tribune reported.

“A victory of democracy and people of the country,” he said.

“The election was held in a free, fair and peaceful manner, overcoming many obstacles. They [BNP] wanted to confuse the international and national friends of Bangladesh by spreading propaganda,” he added.

Meanwhile, Awami League Office Secretary Barrister Biplab Barua highlighted that the turnout of voters in the 12th parliamentary election was satisfactory despite the “terrorism and anti-election activities of the BNP”.

PM Hasina also accused the Bangladesh opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of inciting violence in the country and said that they are against the development of the people.

“Bangladesh is a sovereign country and people are my power,” she said after voting, adding that she hoped her party would win the people’s mandate, which would give it a fifth term since 1996.

PM said, “BNP and Jamat did several arsoning and various other violent activities, such as burning train, burning vehicle, stopping people’s movement...I would say that they do not believe in democracy, they are not patriots, and they are against the development of the people. Moreover, they don’t want democracy to continue.”

Hasina, 76, urged citizens to cast their ballots and show their faith in the democratic process, branding the main opposition

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) a “terrorist organisation”, Al Jazeera reported.

The 12th national polls in Bangladesh ended on Sunday amidst a largely peaceful environment.

However, according to the Daily Star, voters’ presence was noticeably low, with many election centres hardly seeing any queues throughout the day. In many centres, election officials and polling agents sat idly with very little to do.

The voting began at 8 am on Sunday at 261,912 polling booths in 42,024 voting centres and continued until 4 pm with 299 parliamentary seats up for election, according to the Dhaka Tribune.

Highlighting the anti-election activities by the opposition party, incidents of violence were reported in different districts, which left one person dead in Munshiganj and many others injured in different parts of the country. — **ANI**

### Hasina praises India, highlights role in 1971 Liberation War

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina extended her wishes for India and said that Bangladesh is lucky to have a trusted friend like India. She also highlighted India’s support during the Liberation War in 1971.

In her message to India, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said, “We are very lucky...India is our trusted friend. During our Liberation War, they supported us... After 1975, when we lost our whole family...they gave us shelter. So our best wishes to the people of India.”

PM Hasina recounted the horrors of her family’s massacre in 1975, in which her whole family was killed and she lived in exile in India for years. She later returned to Bangladesh and took over the Awami League.

Hasina emphasised the importance of democracy for the development of the country on Sunday and said that her government in past years has established people’s democratic rights.

“Our country is sovereign and independent...We have a big population. We have established people’s democratic rights...I want to make sure that democracy should continue in this country and

without democracy, you can’t make any development. As we are a long-term democratic system from 2009 to 2023, that is why Bangladesh made this much of an achievement,” she said.

PM Hasina also underscored that her government created an atmosphere where people are able to come out and vote. She stated, “My heartfelt thanks to the people of Bangladesh. There were many obstacles but the people of our country are very much aware of their voting rights and the need for polls...We were able to create an atmosphere where people were able to come out and vote.”

She also accused the Bangladesh opposition party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of inciting violence in the country and said that they are against the development of the people.

She said, “BNP and Jamat did several arsoning and various other violent activities, such as burning train, burning vehicle, stopping people’s movement...I would say that they do not believe in democracy, they are not patriots, and they are against the development of the people. Moreover, they don’t want democracy to continue.” — **ANI**

PIECE OF FUSELAGE

## Missing part of Boeing 737 Max jet found in backyard

**PORTLAND:** The head of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) said late on Sunday that part of a Boeing aircraft that blew off mid-flight on Friday was located by a schoolteacher in his backyard.

The piece of fuselage recovered from the yard in Portland, Oregon could provide clues as to what caused a panel used to plug a portion reserved for an exit door on an Alaska Airlines’ Boeing Max 9 jet to blow off on Friday shortly after the flight took off.

Investigators said a plug on an unused exit door seal blew off while the plane was climbing, depressurising the aircraft at 16,000 feet (about 4.9 kilometres).

The plane, with the 171 passengers and six crew members on board made an emergency landing back to the Portland International

Airport with no serious injuries. Boeing plans to hold a company-wide webcast on safety on Tuesday to address its response.

Alaska Airlines and United Airlines have since cancelled at least 350 flights, as all of their Boeing 737 Max 9 jetliners remained grounded on Sunday amid an investigation into the incident.

The airlines are currently waiting to be told how to inspect their planes to prevent another incident.

Alaska Airlines said it had cancelled 170 flights — more than one-fifth of its schedule — by mid-afternoon on the West Coast.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) wrote on social media that it “is requiring immediate inspections of certain Boeing 737 MAX 9 planes before they can return to flight.”



“These aircraft have now also been pulled from service until details about possible additional maintenance work are confirmed with the FAA,” Alaska Airlines said in a statement. “We are in touch with the FAA to determine what, if any, further work is required.”

United Airlines said it had canceled at least 180 flights for Sunday. It had salvaged others by using other planes not affected by the grounding.

“We’ve begun steps such as removing the inner panel to access the emergency door, and begun preliminary inspections while awaiting final instructions,” it said in a statement.

The FAA on Saturday grounded all Boeing 737 Max 9 aircraft operated by US airlines or foreign airlines flown into the country.

This order affects about 171 planes worldwide. Of this, 144 planes operate within the US, ac-

cording to data from aviation analytics firm Cirium.

Apart from Alaska Airlines and United Airlines — the only two US carriers using the jetliner, Turkish Airlines, Panama’s Copa Airlines and Aeromexico said they were grounding affected jets.

Alaska Airlines briefly returned 18 of its 65 Boeing jetliners to service, less than 24 hours after the blow out, but soon received a notice from the FAA saying the planes needed additional work.

After finding the blown out plug, investigators said they will examine it for any indication as to how it broke free. The part measures 26 by 48 inches (66 by 121 centimetres) and weighs 63 pounds (28.5 kilograms).

US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Chair Jennifer Homendy said Sunday that

the aircraft involved in the incidents was not being used for long flights over water, for example, to Hawaii, after a warning light that could have indicated a pressurization problem lit up on three different flights, AP news agency reported.

Homendy cautioned that the pressurization light might be unrelated to Friday’s incident.

United said it was waiting for Boeing to release a bulletin on how to inspect the 737 Max 9 planes. AP news agency reported that Boeing is working on a bulletin but had not yet submitted it to the FAA, citing a person familiar with the situation.

Reuters news agency, also citing an unnamed source, reported that Boeing and the FAA were yet to agree on the criteria for the checks.

— **DW**

# UNRWA says 142 UN employees killed so far in Gaza since October 7

UNRWA said that 130 of its facilities and schools were directly hit by Israeli shelling, indicating that what is happening in Gaza is more dangerous than Nakba of 1948

**GAZA:** The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) announced the death of 142 United Nations employees in the Gaza Strip, as a result of the ongoing Israeli occupation army aggression against the strip. It pointed out that the number of UN employees as victims in the current Israeli aggression is the highest in the organisation's history. UNRWA said, in a statement, that 130 of its facilities and



schools were directly hit by Israeli shelling, indicating that what is happening in Gaza is more dangerous than the Nakba of 1948, after the occupation turned Gaza into a place unsuitable for living. Additionally, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are starving, which requires redoubling efforts to allow for humanitarian aid. Since the start of the Israeli occupation army's aggression on 7 October 2023, the Gaza Strip has witnessed a horrific humanitar-

ian crisis due to cutting off electricity, fuel and water services, at a time when many organizations confirm that the humanitarian aid that has reached the Strip so far is very small compared to the size of the ordeal.

**WHO forced to cancel medical resupply mission due to safety guarantees**  
The World Health Organization (WHO) on Sunday said it had to cancel a planned mission to transport medical supplies to northern Gaza

due to lack of safety guarantees. The WHO said the mission cancellation was the fourth since December 26, and meant that it had been 12 days since the organisation had managed to reach the northern part of the Palestinian territory. In a post on social media, the WHO office in the occupied Palestinian territories said: "Heavy bombardment, movement restrictions and interrupted communications are making it nearly impossible to deliver medical supplies regularly and safely across Gaza, particularly in the North." The WHO had been trying to get medical supplies to five hospitals in the north, including the al-Awda Hospital. The WHO said hospitals were severely short-staffed and "perilous conditions" were impeding patients' access to health facilities. The Hamas-run Health Ministry, meanwhile, on Monday said that 249 Palestinians had been killed in Gaza over the past 24 hours. The ministry doesn't provide a breakdown as to how many of its figures are combatants or civilians. However, it is considered by several UN agencies as a largely reliable source on casualties in Gaza. — Agencies

## GCC Secretary-General stresses necessity of international efforts to halt ongoing Israeli attacks

**RIYADH:** Jasem Mohamed Al Budaiwi, GCC Secretary-General emphasised the necessity of concerted international efforts to halt the ongoing Israeli attacks against the Gaza Strip. During his meeting with European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Al Budaiwi reviewed the latest regional and international developments, notably the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip. They discussed ways to enhance international and regional efforts aimed at ending this crisis and putting an end to this humanitarian catastrophe. The two sides also discussed aspects of the regional security dialogue for senior officials from the GCC countries and the European Un-



ion, scheduled to take place on 24 January 2024 at the headquarters of the Secretariat General in Riyadh. They underscored the significance of this dialogue in promoting regional peace and stability. Additionally, they explored means to promote cooperation between the GCC and the European Union and develop it across various fields, as well as the importance of collective action between the two sides in facing current challenges. — ONA

### CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

## Former Gambian minister goes on trial in Switzerland

**GENEVA:** Proceedings against Gambia's former Interior Minister Ousman Sonko for crimes against humanity began Monday. Sonko is accused of "having supported, participated in and failed to prevent systematic and generalised attacks as part of the repression carried out by the Gambian security forces against all opponents of the regime." The crimes are alleged to have taken place over the course of 16 years, and include nine counts of crimes against humanity under Yahya Jammeh's dictatorship. Sonko was the West African nation's interior minister between 2006 and 2016. — DW

# Thousands of Rohingya refugees homeless after fire at camp

**COX BAZAR:** Thousands of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh were left without shelter on Sunday after a fire tore through their camp in the early hours of Sunday morning. No deaths were reported from the incident, which occurred at Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar. "The fire was big, and it destroyed about 1,040 shelters in the camp," local fire brigade chief Shafiqul Islam told the Associated Press. "We took about two hours to get the blaze under control, engaging 10 fire units from Ukhiya and other stations in the district." Bangladesh's refugee commissioner in Cox's Bazar, Mohammed Mizanur Rahman, said around 4,000 people were left homeless



while the local UNHCR office put the number at around 7,000. The fire also damaged mosques, healthcare facilities and educational centres in the refugee camp. The fire coincided with Bangladesh's general elections on Sunday. A day before polls opened, police reported a number of suspected arson cases at polling places as well as an incident on a passenger train that killed four people. "We have ordered a probe into the [refugee camp] fire," Rahman said. "We suspect it is an act of arson." Fires often break out among the

crowded makeshift structures in Cox's Bazar, especially during the dry season from November to April. One fire in 2021 killed 15 refugees, while another fire last year that destroyed around 12,000 homes. "The cause of the fire currently remains unknown, and we are assured by the government authorities that an investigation into the cause of the fire will be carried out," the UNHCR said. The majority Muslim Rohingya people face widespread discrimination in Buddhist-majority Myanmar, where they are denied citizenship and constitutional rights. Their persecution has repeatedly been called a genocide. Almost one million people now

live in cramped, bamboo-and-plastic structures shelters across the border in Bangladesh. Most of them fled Myanmar during a military crackdown in 2017. "We are suffering from the cold severely, facing a difficult situation," a 65-year-old woman who survived the blaze told the Associated Press. "Currently, we are sitting by a stream with my grandchildren after narrowly escaping a life-threatening situation. Our homes have been destroyed by the fire." Violence between rival Rohingya groups has also plagued the camps in recent months. More than 60 refugees have been killed in turf wars and drug-related clashes last year, according to police. — DW

### NIGHTMARE FOR COMMUTERS

# Farmers' protest causes nationwide disruption in Germany

**MUNICH:** German farmers are angered by the government's plans to slash agricultural subsidies. Blockades are expected to disrupt roadways across the country, posing a nightmare for commuters. The protests are in full swing across Germany, with farmers' vehicles blocking access to highways and city centres. In Munich alone, police said they had accompanied about 5,500 tractors from the surrounding region toward the city. A rally was planned for later in the center of the Bavarian capital. Officials in the state of Brandenburg said entire towns had been blockaded by the protesting farmers, including Brandenburg an der Havel and Cottbus. Police in Rhineland-Palatinate reported an 18- to 20-kilometre (about 12-mile) long convoy with more than 1,000 tractors and trucks moving along the autobahn toward the state capital, Mainz. There were also numerous demonstrating farmers with heavy machinery in the urban areas of Hamburg and Bremen, as well as Düsseldorf in North Rhine-Westphalia. The German government says it is not considering any further changes to plans to phase out agricultural subsidies. The announcement comes as a week of nationwide protests by farmers got underway. "There are no considerations within the government to change anything," a government spokesperson said during a regular press conference in Berlin. "In the end, a government has to decide and has to lead the way, and that can't always be to everyone's satisfaction," he added.

**Protests halt VW production line**  
The farmers' protests have brought production at a Volkswagen factory in East Frisia to a halt, with staff unable to reach their workplaces.



dairies, as well as a fluctuating world market. "There are good and bad years but, above all, there is a structural problem," Habeck said in a video produced by his ministry. Farmers were often unable to pass on their production costs because prices were not being set by them. In turn, they were locked into a cycle of having to produce more, and smaller farms were gradually disappearing. **Structural change** "It's called structural change. I think it's something euphemistic. It is the industrialization of agriculture." While he said it was understandable that farmers would want to hold on to subsidies without concessions, Habeck stressed there were other answers such as fairer prices, rewards for sustainability, and direct selling to consumers. "In my opinion, we should use the debate now to seriously and honestly to discuss exactly that," Habeck said. Habeck and his wife were held up for several hours late on Thursday on their return from a private vacation on an island off Germany's northern coast, as roughly 250 to 300 farmers blockaded the port at which their ferry was docking. **Traffic blocked in central Berlin** In Berlin, DW correspondent Matthew Moore said the farmers are making their presence felt in the German capital, where tractors are parked in defiance near the Brandenburg Gate. "They certainly have paralyzed this boulevard," said Moore. "This street beside me is normally bursting with traffic on a Monday morning but at the moment it's choked up with tractors and in the last few minutes we've heard their horns blaring." — DW

"Production is on hold today," a VW spokeswoman said on Monday, with access routes to the plant at Emden blocked by the protests. It was unknown how many employees were affected by the action, which stopped the production of the company's combustion engine models. VW also makes electric cars at the site although production of these after the Christmas holiday period is only set to resume next week. German Economy Minister Robert Habeck has called for a debate about the agricultural sector in light of the protests. The Green politician, who is also Germany's vice-chancellor, highlighted his time as an agriculture minister in the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein. Habeck said the real problem for farmers was the economic landscape they were operating in with heavy pressure from discounter, slaughterhouses, and



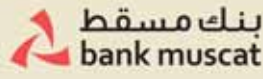
**OMAN CRUDE PRICE RISES**  
The price of Oman oil has increased, with prices for delivery by March 2024 reaching \$77.83, said Dubai Mercantile Exchange (DME). The DME statement said that the price of Oman oil rose by 18 cents from the price of Friday, which was \$77.65. - **ONA**

# MARKET

## BUSINESS & FINANCE



**ENERGY TRANSITION**  
As the 'decade of deployment' gains momentum, the energy transition is witnessing an unprecedented surge in investments, reshaping the landscape of the global energy sector. **>B2**



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# OHB aims to provide housing finance to over 60,000 families

Oman Housing Bank's Iskan programme provides a lending portfolio worth OMR1.9 billion over the next five years

**MUSCAT:** Acting in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, Oman Housing Bank (OHB) launched a new programme codenamed "Iskan", which seeks to accelerate financing for applicants on the waiting list at the bank and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

The launch ceremony was held at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel under the auspices of Sultan Salim Al Habshi, Minister of Finance. It was attended by OHB Chairman and board members, CEOs of local banks, experts and specialists in economic affairs and the local press.

Zahir Marhoon Al Abri, Director General of Treasury and Accounts at the Ministry of Finance, said that the programme would lend fiscal support to more than 60,000 families over the next five years.

Iskan programme provides a lending portfolio worth OMR1.9 billion over the next five years, said Al Abri, noting that the programme combines the contributions of local banks through a banking conglomerate aimed to furnish the required financial liquidity that ensures its success.

Musa Masoud Al Jadidi, CEO



of Oman Housing Bank, through a visual presentation, indicated that the maximum financing sum stands at OMR60,000 per eligible citizen. This is in addition to OMR80,000 for each citizen wishing to purchase residential units at Sultan Haitham City and integrated city projects undertaken by the Ministry of Housing and Urban

Planning, he added.

Al Jadidi pointed out that the interest rate on loans was determined by the ratio of salary: 1 percent interest rate is paid by those who draw a salary of less than OMR401, 3 percent is paid by recipients of OMR401 to OMR1,000 and 4 percent by those who receive more than OMR1,000. - **ONA**



### RESEARCH REPORT

## Indian tax payers migrating to higher range of total gross income: SBI report

**NEW DELHI:** The income tax returns filed by individual taxpayers in India earning between Rs 5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh climbed by 295 per cent in the assessment years 2013-14 and 2021-22, showing a positive trend of migration to a higher range of gross total income, according to a report by SBI Research.

The Economic Research Department of the State Bank of India has published a report on income inequality, taxpayers' data, MSMEs and changing consumption patterns in rural economies.

The number of ITRs filed by people earning between Rs 10 lakh and Rs 25 lakh has increased by 291 per cent, the report said. Total number of persons filing Income tax increased to 74 million in the assessment year 2022-23 from 70 million in 2021-22.

"There is a palpable change in income pattern of MSMEs too, reflecting the changing contours of industry/services as formalization drive brings more entities into the net," the report read.

Around 19.5 per cent of major micro-sized firms have been able to shift their income upwards, to classify them into small, medium and large-sized firms.

Out of these, 4.8 per cent of firms have transitioned them-



selves into small firms, around 6.1 per cent of firms transitioned into medium-sized firms, and around 9.3 per cent of firms have transitioned into large-sized firms.

"This clearly indicates MSME units are getting bigger and getting integrated into larger value chains with initiatives like PLI (production-linked incentive)."

The study also showed that female tax filers are around 15 per cent of the individual tax filers with certain states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and West Bengal having a higher share of female tax filers.

States such as Maharashtra, Gujarat, Delhi, and Karnataka, which have been traditional leaders in income tax base are nearing saturation and their share in the overall tax base is decreasing continuously, it said. - **ANI**

### ATTACHMENT TO CASH

## Why are Germans hoarding billions of old deutsche marks?

**BRUSSELS:** Germans will start 2024 with a few extra billion stuffed between sofa cushions. No, not euros, but old deutsche marks.

People in Germany are famous for their attachment to cash, but more than two decades after the introduction of the euro, millions of deutsche mark (DM) coins and colourful bills are in sock drawers or have been lost down sewer drains.

While some of this old money lies with nostalgic Germans or collectors, another chunk can be chalked up as souvenirs taken home by tourists over the years. Experts say countries that once used it as a reserve currency may still hold some. No one really knows for sure. Though these marks can no longer be used, they can be traded for euros.

### Just how much is out there?

The fact that marks ceased to be legal tender in early 2002 seems to make little difference to their homecoming. Of the 162.3 billion marks in circulation at the time, around 7.5% of the hard currency is unaccounted for. Over half of the coins by value have not come home in the last two decades.

At the end of 2023, there were 12.24 billion marks still in circulation, according to the Bundesbank, the country's central bank.

Broken down, that comes to 5.68 billion marks in bills and 6.56 billion marks in coins. Together, they are worth around €6.26 billion



(\$6.92 billion). Even for Europe's biggest economy, that is a significant amount lying idle, especially at a time when the government is searching for funding for infrastructure projects like the green energy transition and rail upgrades that are important for its economic future.

### Marks slowly but surely coming home

Even though the deutsche marks are "only gradually finding" their way back to the Bundesbank, the bank is not worried about the missing cash. Anyone with old coins or bills can exchange them at a central bank branch in any amount. And indeed, a lot is exchanged each year.

The exchange rate is fixed at €1

to 1.95583 deutsche marks, and the service is free of charge.

Last year, over 90,000 people showed up at the central bank, and upward of 53 million marks were handed over in exchange for €27 million, an increase over the previous year. Two-thirds of the overall value were banknotes, while one-third comprised coins. The most came from Bavaria, followed by North Rhine-Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg.

Importantly, the bank assures us there are no plans to discontinue this service. This makes Germany a bit of an outlier, as only five other eurozone countries have no deadline for handing over their old currencies: Austria, Ireland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Other countries that took up the euro offered only a limited window for the exchange of money. In France, any franc hoarders had until March 31, 2008, at the latest, to hand them in. Greece was a bit more generous and gave everyone until March 2012 to exchange their drachmas.

Now anyone there who finds old currency under a loose floorboard is out of luck.

### Germans continue paying in cash

Luckily, for Germans, there is no rush. And maybe some of them still cannot let go. It is not out of the ordinary today to see "Cash Only!" signs in restaurants and kiosks.

In 2021, despite an uptick in cashless payments, cash was the most frequently used means of day-to-day payment in Germany, according to the latest study forsa, a market research institute, conducted for the Bundesbank.

Though cash payments have fallen sharply since 2017, the researchers concluded that cash was still used for 58% of goods and services purchased. Measured in turnover, cash payments amounted to only 30% since larger purchases and online shopping are often paid by other means.

On average individuals carried €100 in their wallets. For one-third of people, cash remains the generally preferred means of payment, found forsa. - **WV**

MARKET

# Global energy transition witnesses unprecedented surge in investments

The financial ecosystem, comprising public equity markets, banks, and rapidly expanding private markets, is steering billions of dollars into diverse energy transition projects

**NEW DELHI:** As the ‘decade of deployment’ gains momentum, the energy transition is witnessing an unprecedented surge in investments, reshaping the landscape of the global energy sector. According to S&P Global Commodity Insights, the passage of the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act in the US marked the initiation of this transformative period, challenging traditional expectations and catalysing substantial capital flows.



Contrary to linear projections, the energy transition is proving to be multifaceted, influenced by capital dynamics and geopolitical shifts. The financial ecosystem, comprising public equity markets, banks, and rapidly expanding private markets, is steering billions of dollars into diverse energy transition projects. In 2023 alone, over \$500 billion was invested in energy transition, reflecting historic acceleration. Private capital funds have played a pivotal role, raising around \$200 billion since August 2022 and investing a significant portion in renewable power production and emerging technologies.

This trend is redefining the ownership landscape of power sector utilities, challenging traditional structures. New participants, including technology firms and real estate owners, are entering energy markets, contributing to the development of batteries, electric vehicle charging stations, and distributed solar generation. Commercial property upgrades post-COVID have incorporated these elements, showcasing a synergy between technology integration and sustainability. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology predicts that the demand for low-carbon power in data centres associated with arti-

ficial intelligence could reach 21 per cent of the current installed global electricity capacity. Large natural resource companies, midstream firms, and energy consumers are adapting to new counterparties, revenue streams, and evolving mandates for electrification and digitalization. With over half a trillion dollars deployed in the last 18 months and additional announced investments, energy transition financing has undergone a significant shift in scale and speed. However, challenges like supply chain constraints, permitting delays, and regulatory frameworks are struggling to keep pace with

the growing queue of projects. Certain areas are advancing more rapidly than others, with battery deployment and manufacturing experiencing a sharp acceleration. In contrast, sectors like carbon capture and storage are lagging. An analysis indicates that 82 per cent of private capital energy transition investments between August 2022 and August 2023 focused on electrification and the deployment of renewable power, while only 18 per cent targeted decarbonisation technologies for heavy industry. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) in the US has been instrumental in combating climate change through tax incentives, grants, and loans for clean energy. While the IRA has transformed the US economy, approximately 60 per cent of global private equity investment in energy transition in 2023 has occurred outside the US. Global incentives aligned with decreasing costs of solar, wind, and battery technologies, fostering efficiency gains. Despite the global impact of energy transition financing, investment concentration remains high in developed economies, leaving a significant gap in renewable energy investing in the Global South. With the annual global gap in renewable energy investing esti-

mated at \$700 billion, developing economies hold immense potential for impactful clean energy investment. While the deployment of enormous amounts of low-cost solar and batteries is underway, integrating these changes into existing business models and infrastructure will take time. Energy market participants are leveraging their existing skills and tools to make investment decisions in the evolving energy transition landscape. As S&P Global expands its coverage in areas like transition metals insights, renewable energy project data, and carbon markets, it emphasizes the importance of transparency, reliable data, and actionable insights. Adapting to the energy transition requires a nuanced understanding of the evolving energy segments, providing companies with optimal pathways to achieve their net-zero goals. The energy transition’s transformative journey, distinct in scope and scale, necessitates familiar tools - transparency, reliable data, and actionable insights. S&P Global remains committed to providing these essential resources for navigating the complexities of both traditional hydrocarbons and emerging energy markets. -ANI

CURRENCY



## Dollar holds ground as US inflation data looms

**SINGAPORE:** The dollar was steady on Monday ahead of a key US inflation report later in the week for further clarity on the Federal Reserve’s monetary policy outlook, after markets got off to a hesitant start to the year as rate cut bets were pared. The dollar rose 0.05 per cent to 144.67, extending its gain from last week when it jumped 2.6 per cent on the Japanese currency, its best weekly performance since June 2022, Reuters reported.

The greenback’s rally was underpinned by a rebound in US Treasury yields as traders tempered their expectations of the pace and scale of Fed cuts this year. Elsewhere, sterling tacked on 0.02 per cent to \$1.2721, while the euro edged 0.08 per cent higher to \$1.0948, after slipping 0.9 per cent last week. The Aussie gained 0.1 per cent to \$0.6721, recouping some of its losses from a 1.5 per cent fall last week. -BNA

ENERGY GIANT

# Shell poised for robust fourth quarter surge in gas trading profits

**NEW DELHI:** London-based energy giant Shell Plc has provided an update on its outlook for the fourth quarter of 2023, expecting a substantial increase in earnings from gas trading. However, the company foresees lower profits in the buying and selling of oil products and chemicals. According to a press release by Shell, the trading update, issued on Monday, highlights the impact of seasonal shifts in the gas market and increased production of liquefied gas, a key driver of profits for Shell. In contrast, the chemicals and oil products division is expected to incur a loss for the period, according to the trading update. Shell’s trading performance in the prior quarter met expectations, aligning with a mixed results season for oil majors. The company, led by Chief Executive Officer Wael Sawan, has been actively repurchasing shares

A press release by Shell highlights the impact of seasonal shifts in the gas market and increased production of liquefied gas, a key driver of profits

rowed from 1.83 million to 1.93 million barrels a day. Additionally, Shell anticipates non-cash post-tax impairments in the fourth quarter, ranging from \$2.5 billion to \$4.5 billion. The company attributes these impairments to macroeconomic and external developments, along with portfolio choices, including the Singapore Chemicals & Products assets. Shell, as an international energy company, specialises in the exploration, production, refining, and marketing of oil and natural gas. The company also focuses on the manufacturing and marketing of chemicals, incorporating advanced technologies and innovative approaches to contribute to a sustainable energy future. Shell invests in renewable energy sources, electric vehicle charging, and low-carbon fuels, such as advanced biofuels and hydrogen. -ANI

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BRIEFS

Oil prices down more than 1%



**SINGAPORE:** Oil prices fell by more than 1 per cent on Monday on a rise in OPEC output. Brent crude slipped 1.09 per cent, or 86 cents, to \$77.90 a barrel by 0344 GMT. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures shed 1.15 per cent, or 85 cents, to \$72.96 a barrel. -BNA

Gold drops by \$10, hitting 3-week low



**ABU DHABI:** Gold prices declined during today's trading, losing more than US\$10, hitting a three-week low. As of 09:26 UAE time, the yellow metal declined by 0.5 percent or \$10.23 to reach \$2035.39 per ounce, after touching its lowest since 2nd December. Gold futures for February 2024 also declined 0.38 percent or \$7.95 to reach \$2041.85 per ounce. -WAM

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Eyeing vast opportunities, multinationals flock to China

**BEIJING:** Multinational corporations are eager to increase their investments in the prosperous Chinese market as the new year begins. Despite a challenging global environment and lackluster economic recovery, these companies continue to see untapped potential in China. China offers promising opportunities for businesses from different countries to expand, thanks to its solid infrastructure, extensive consumer market and favourable investment climate that is constantly improving. Ola Kallenius, chairman of the board of management of Mercedes-Benz Group, said that the company has made significant strides in China over the years, laying a solid foundation for future growth. With China's mature economic development and immense market size, there remains substantial growth potential in the long run, said Kallenius in an interview with Xinhua, adding that his company hopes to seize this opportunity and further deepen its strategic presence in China. Germany's Volkswagen Group, another multinational automotive company, is pushing for complete production, research and procurement localization. Last November, the group revealed that Volkswagen China Technology Company (VCTC), its largest development center outside Ger-

many, plans to unveil an electric platform for the entry-level segment within 36 months. "With the development of a China-specific platform for the entry-level segment, we are taking on significant development tasks for our 'in China for China' strategy," Ralf Brandstaetter, chairman and CEO of Volkswagen Group China, said. The rise of China's electric vehicle industry has provided ample business opportunities for French automotive equipment manufacturers such as Valeo and Faurecia. Faurecia's 2023 third-quarter financial report revealed an 11.8 percent increase in sales in the Chinese market, showcasing robust performance. Patrick Koller, chief executive of Faurecia, has repeatedly

emphasized the Chinese market's strategic importance for the company on different occasions, saying the increasing influence within China's automotive sector is expected to further drive the development and progress of Faurecia's automotive electronics supply chain. Christian Dreger, senior research fellow at European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder), told Xinhua that the European market and enterprises pay significant attention to China's economic development. The scale of China's market, the population's level of education, high-quality infrastructure, and China's influential role in driving economic growth in Southeast Asia are all crucial factors for the recovery of the European economy, Dreger said. -Xinhua



# Golden Globes 2024: ‘Oppenheimer’ leads with five wins, here’s the full list of winners

California: The 2024 Hollywood award season commenced with this year’s Golden Globes ceremony where director Christopher Nolan’s ‘Oppenheimer’ won 5 awards.

The biopic film scored wins for Best Actor - Drama Cillian Murphy, Best Director Christopher Nolan, Supporting Actor for Robert Downey Jr, Best Original Score for Ludwig Goransson and Best Picture- Drama. However, Margot Robbie’s ‘Barbie’ won the first-ever Golden Globe for cinematic and box-office success and singers Billie Eilish and her brother Finneas O’Connell also received a Golden Globe for the song ‘What Was I Made For’ from ‘Barbie’.

The 81st edition of the Golden Globes which held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, California, was hosted by standup comedian Jo Koy. Here’s a full list of 2024 Golden Globe winners:

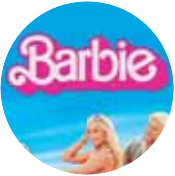
**Best Motion Picture, Drama**  
Oppenheimer



**Best Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy**  
Poor Things



**Best Motion Picture, Animated**  
The Boy and the Heron



**Cinematic and Box Office Achievement**  
Barbie

**Best Motion Picture, Non-English Language**  
Anatomy of a Fall



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, Drama**  
Lily Gladstone - Killers of the Flower Moon



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture, Drama**  
Cillian Murphy- Oppenheimer



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy**  
Emma Stone - Poor Things



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Motion Picture, Musical or Comedy**  
Paul Giamatti - The Holdovers



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in any Motion Picture**  
Da’Vine Joy Randolph - The Holdovers



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in any Motion Picture**  
Robert Downey Jr. -Oppenheimer



**Best Director, Motion Picture**  
Christopher Nolan - Oppenheimer



**Best Screenplay, Motion Picture**  
Justine Triet and Arthur Harari - Anatomy of a Fall



**Best Original Score, Motion Picture**  
Ludwig Goransson - Oppenheimer



**Best Original Song, Motion Picture**  
What Was I Made For?,” from “Barbie



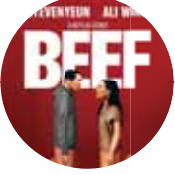
**Best Television Series, Drama**  
Succession



**Best Television Series, Musical or Comedy**  
The Bear



**Best Limited Series, Anthology Series or a Motion Picture made for Television**  
Beef



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series, Drama**  
Sarah Snook - Succession



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series, Drama**  
Kieran Culkin- Succession



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Series, Musical or Comedy**  
Ayo Edebiri - The Bear



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Series, Musical or Comedy**  
Jeremy Allen White - The Bear



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Limited Series, Anthology Series or Television Movie**  
Ali Wong - Beef



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Limited Series, Anthology Series or Motion Picture Made for Television**  
Steven Yeun - Beef



**Best Performance by an Actress in a Television Supporting Role**  
Elizabeth Debicki - The Crown



**Best Performance by an Actor in a Television Supporting Role**  
Matthew Macfadyen- Succession



**Best Performance in Stand-Up Comedy on Television**  
Ricky Gervais- Ricky Gervais: Armageddon. -AMT



SPORTS

FORMER SOUTH AFRICA SKIPPER

Smith for inclusion of Kohli, Rohit in T20 team

CAPE TOWN: Amid buzz over the availability of senior batters Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli in the upcoming T20 World Cup, the former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith said it will be a tough task for the Indian coaches and selection committee to balance some experience with youth in the WC squad. The senior duo of Kohli and Rohit made a comeback to India's T20I setup for the first time since the end of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022, in what is a major development for the side ahead of the T20 World Cup 2024. The tournament will kick off on

June 1 and will be co-hosted by the West Indies and the US. India have been placed in Group A alongside Ireland, Pakistan, Canada and the US. Many youngster have left their mark significantly in the T20I format for India making selection a thought task for the selectors. While Kohli has been in spectacular T20 format for India in the IPL, Rohit has struggled in the shorter format recently. They were India's top two run scorers in the last ODI World Cup, scoring 765 and 597 runs, respectively. Smith said that the India coaches and panel have to analyse the



talent they want in their T20 WC squad and with the amount of talent that India has now, it is a difficult choice to make. "It's about balancing workloads and introducing new players at various times, giving opportunity to the player with the amount of cricket India plays. We have seen IPL produce a serious amount of talent for India in this format. I think the selection panel and coaches have to figure out what stars they want and what squad they want to take from India to play on those types of pitches. We will have to see how they will com-

pile the squad. With the amount of talent that India has now, it is a difficult choice to make. I think balancing some experience with youth...also how they go about that," Smith told ANI. Last year the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that cricket will be a part of the Los Angeles Olympic Games in 2028 and will make its return after 128 years to the multi-sport extravaganza. The former South Africa captain said the inclusion of cricket in the Olympic Games is a big push to attract more countries to the game and it is a big chance

for cricket to challenge football in terms of global sports. "I guess for me Test cricket is something we all want to protect. T20 cricket is the growth in the future. LA2028 is a big push to attract other nations to grow in the game with WC around the corner. We want to see cricket grow and strong. I think cricket really have the opportunity to challenge football in terms of global sports. I am excited to see how that will go. LA28 is going to be a really interesting time to be a cricketer to be exposed to the Olympics," former South Africa captain said. -ANI

PCB names Rizwan as T20I vice-captain

The 31-year-old Rizwan has featured in 85 T20Is, amassing 2,797 runs, including one century and 25 half-centuries

LAHORE: Batter Mohammad Rizwan has been appointed as Pakistan's T20I vice-captain, joining the leadership group under captain Shaheen Shah Afridi, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Monday. "Rizwan's first assignment as deputy to Shaheen Shah Afridi will be the five-match T20I series against New Zealand, scheduled to take place in New Zealand from 12 January," PCB said in an official statement. Babar Azam announced his decision to step down as Pakistan captain from all formats of the game after his side's debacle in the ICC World Cup 2023 in India last year. Later, PCB announced that Afridi would take



over as T20I captain after Babar's decision to step down. The 31-year-old Rizwan has featured in 85 T20Is, amassing 2,797 runs, including one century and 25 half-centuries. Behind the stumps, Rizwan has taken 41 catches and 11 stumpings. Reacting to the appointment, The 31-year-old stated that he is looking forward to working with the coaching staff and new captain during the series.

"It is an honour to be named as the vice-captain of Pakistan Men's T20I side. I am thankful to the PCB for entrusting me with this responsibility. I am looking forward to working closely with the captain, coaching staff, and my teammates to contribute to the team's success," Mohammad Rizwan was quoted as saying by PCB. Afridi will lead a 17-player squad against New Zealand in the

T20I bilateral series. Full squad: Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain), Mohammad Rizwan (vice-captain and wicket-keeper), Aamir Jamal, Abbas Afridi, Azam Khan (wicket-keeper), Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Haseebullah (wicket-keeper), Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Usama Mir and Zaman Khan. -ANI

AUSTRALIA BATTER

Grateful for the way you've transformed my world, David Warner recalls his wife's role in cricket career

SYDNEY: Australia batter David Warner, who recently announced retirement from ODI and Test formats, applauded his wife Candice Warner's "unwavering support" and "boundless optimism". Warner took to Instagram to express his gratitude towards his wife. In the post, Warner wrote that the success he got in his career was because of his wife and stated that she has been there through thick and thin.

"I write this with a lot of emotions. What can I say!!! Honestly, you, @candywarner1, are the reason I made it this far. I've said it many times before: 4 am wake-ups, you're off your head. Cricket players do not need to do this, but the thought of what discipline meant to me was that I didn't know the real meaning," Warner wrote. Warner on Saturday brought down the curtains on his illustrious Test career.

"We don't train at that hour, we don't play at that hour, but what it does do is change mindset to what impossible is to be made possible. I can't thank you enough for entering my world and giving me the best chance of doing what I love for as long as I did," the left-hand batter opined. Warner wrote that his wife has shown him "true meaning of love" and he is forever grateful to her. Warner thanked Candice for be-

ing his partner and called her an "extraordinary woman". "You've faced challenges with grace and determination, showing me what true courage looks like. Your unwavering support and boundless optimism have been a source of inspiration for me, and I am grateful for the way you've transformed my world with your presence. I can't imagine life without you," the opener asserted. -ANI

STAR CRICKETER

Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan wins elections from Magura-1 constituency, receives over 180,000 votes

DHAKA: Bangladesh Star cricketer Shakib Al Hasan, currently captain of the one-day team, who contested from Magura-1 constituency for the Awami League (AL) party, has secured victory in the elections by receiving 185,388 votes, Dhaka Tribune reported. Hasan's nearest rival, Kazi Rezaul Hossain, secured 45,993 votes. The total number of centres in the Magura-1 constituency is 152, according to Dhaka Tribune report. Voting in the 12th national polls ended on Sunday. Voting in Bangladesh started at 8 am (local time) at 261,912 polling booths in 42,024 voting centres and continued until 4 pm (local time) with 299 parliamentary seats up for election, according to Dhaka Tribune report. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina won the Gopalganj-3 constituency in a landslide victory, her eighth term as a Member of Parliament. Hasina's party secured victory in 223 seats to form the government in the

election conducted on Sunday. She received 249,962 votes while her nearest rival, Md Atiqur Rahman, got 6,999 votes. Meanwhile, another candidate, Mahabur Mollah, received 425 votes. During a campaign event in Magura on Tuesday, Hasan arrived in an SUV, acknowledged the crowd like a seasoned politician, and quickly went inside the auditorium, where several people were waiting for him as he appeared for an interview with a popular YouTuber and talk show host, Rafsan Sabab, Al Jazeera reported. The cricketer who came for an election event, which was a part of his PR campaign, received a rousing welcome as people waited for him for a long time. In the interview, Shabab asked the cricketer, "Every district of Bangladesh has its own speciality, be it food, garment or a monument. Here in Magura, when I ask anyone about its speciality, they unanimously say, Shakib Al Hasan." "Yes, I would have said the



same," Hasan wryly responded, according to Al Jazeera report. Shakib, currently the captain of Bangladesh's one-day team, is ranked the number one all-rounder by the International Cricket Council in two of the three for-

mat of the game simultaneously: one-day internationals (ODIs) and T20I formats. The southpaw's prowess and importance to the team are reflected in his consistent performance for the Tigers; no other Bangla-

desh player has scored more runs in the T20I. He is also one of the first names that pops up for red-ball cricket. Prior to the polls, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina had told Shakib Al Hasan to "hit a six" in the 12th national election on January 7, Dhaka Tribune reported. "You do not need to give a speech. You can hit a six, and you can take wickets with the ball. Just hit a six again in the election," the Prime Minister said to the ace all-rounder, calling him a gem. Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina was addressing an election rally at the Government Rajendra College ground in Faridpur on Tuesday. Asian Cricket Council (ACC) decided that a neutral venue will be announced for Asia cup 2023, Pakistan threatened to pull out from ICC World Cup scheduled to be held in India later this year. Yesterday, the ACC has decided that a new venue for Asia cup 2023 will be finalized in the

month of March this year. According to a source, "PCB isn't happy with this thinking that Asia cup could be relocated to some neutral venue, name of UAE is on top of the list which might get the hosting but if it happens then Pakistan will not travel to India for ICC World Cup 2023." The ACC chairperson Jay Shah already revealed that India will not travel to Pakistan for the Asia cup due to security reasons and the tournament will be played at some neutral venue, the new venue will be decided in the second round of the Executive Board meeting of ACC members in the month of March. Last year the Asia cup was held in UAE and the probability of the nation hosting it again is high. Qatar has also shown interest in staging the tournament as a neutral venue amidst political tensions between the neighbouring countries. It has already hosted a few cricket tournaments and franchise-based cricket leagues. -ANI

GUNNERS



Bringing in a striker 'doesn't look realistic', says Arsenal head coach Mikel Arteta

LONDON: Arsenal head coach Mikel Arteta admitted that the possibility of bringing in a striker isn't looking realistic at the moment. Arsenal's woes in the attacking half of the pitch were reflected during their 2-0 loss against Liverpool in the FA Cup. The Gunners, throughout the tie, made plenty of chances but ended up wasting their opportunities to break the stalemate. Liverpool capitalized on the window of opportunity and clinched a 2-0 victory. After the game, Arteta was quizzed about the possibility of bringing in a striker and said as quoted from Sky Sports, "At the moment, it doesn't look realistic. My job is to improve our players and get better results with the players we have." "One thing is what we need and another is what we can do. What we need to do now is stick behind those players, give them some love, train them and make sure they visualise something very different to what is actually happening now. They've done it. We're not going to reinvent the wheel, because they've done it," Arteta added. Arsenal fans have been demanding a striker for quite some time in the January transfer window. Arteta asked the fans to

Arsenal's woes in the attacking half of the pitch were reflected during their 2-0 loss against Liverpool in the FA Cup

# IN PICTURES

**Dragon dance performance held in Malaysia**  
A dragon dance troupe poses for a photo at a shopping mall in Kelang, Selangor state, Malaysia. *Xinhua*



**Russian culture-themed park attracts visitors in Harbin**  
People enjoy themselves at the Volga Manor in Harbin, northeast China's Heilongjiang Province. The Volga Manor, a Russian culture-themed park, turned into a world of ice and snow during the winter time, attracting lots of visitors. — *Xinhua*



**Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Morigaon district, India**  
One-horned Rhinoceros are pictured at the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary in Morigaon district of India's northeastern state of Assam. *Xinhua*



**Coming of Age Day ceremony held in Yokohama, Japan**  
This picture shows youths in costume prior to a Coming of Age Day ceremony in Yokohama, Japan. Coming of Age Day is a public holiday in Japan held annually on the second Monday of January. With the enactment of the revised Civil Code in April 2022, the age of adulthood was lowered to 18 from 20. *Xinhua*

**Fire breaks out at former Japanese PM Kakuei Tanaka's old residence in Tokyo**  
Journalists work near the residence of former Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka in Tokyo, Japan. *Xinhua*



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ROUND-UP

# Bank Muscat inaugurates Green Sports field for Al Shabab Sports Team in Wilayat of Ibra



The new lighting project of Al Shabab Sports team was the dream of the Omani youth while it has now become a reality that would provide the team with an ample opportunity to develop their talents and sports potential through hosting multiple sports and cultural events, activities, and competitions in the evening

**MUSCAT:** In emphasis of its stance of leadership in the Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) and support to the youth and society, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider

in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to enhance the Green Sports programme through the inauguration of more green sports fields across the Sultanate. The bank has recently inaugu-

rated the lighting project for Al Shabab Sports team in Ibra, North Al Sharqiya. The event was hosted under the patronage of Sheikh Abdullah bin Hamad Al Harthi, Shura Council Member, Ibra, with the presence of Badr bin Mohammed Al Hajri, Assistant Regional Manager - North Al Sharqiya, Khalil bin Suleim Al Habsi, Head of Al Shabab Sports team, and a number of invitees and team members. On the inauguration ceremony, Badr bin Mohammed Al Hajri, Assistant Regional Manager, North Al Sharqiya, Bank Muscat, expressed his happiness about the successful execution of Al Shabab Sports team's lightening project as part of the "Green Sports" programme. Badr Al Hajri congratulated Al Shabab Sports team for the successful completion of the project which will contribute to the development of the main

infrastructure of the team.

**Suitable venue**  
"The field will also represent a suitable venue for the team to organise events in the evening and to organise different cultural and sports activities contributing to the enhancement of their sports skills. Furthermore, a large segment of the Omani youth with different age groups is keen to join the events related to the sports and social arenas. Bank Muscat will remain committed to serving the youth through its CSR programme "Green Sports" to keep pace with the developments that contribute to the growth of the sports teams all over the Sultanate. Speaking on the occasion, Khalil bin Suleim Al Habsi, Head of Al Shabab Sports team, said, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank Bank Muscat for the

continuous support to enhancing the "Green Sports" program. This program represents a major social initiative for developing the youth's talents and sports teams in the Sultanate. The fields of local sports teams constitute strategic and convenient areas to organise various sports and cultural events and sports activities. Therefore, the new lighting project of Al Shabab Sports team was the dream of the Omani youth while it has now become a reality that would provide the team with an ample opportunity to develop their talents and sports potential through hosting multiple sports and cultural events, activities, and competitions in the evening."

**13th edition**  
Bank Muscat has already announced the launch of the 13th edition of the Green Sports pro-

gramme for 2024. All local sports teams interested in the program may apply during the period spanning January 1- 31, 2024. This year, the programme will support 20 sports teams from different governorates. The Green Sports programme is one of Bank Muscat's CSR initiatives, which draws from the values of leadership and partnership to create a positive impact on the Omani society. The programme aims to develop and provide a sustainable infrastructure for sports fields in the Sultanate. The scope of Green Sports support for sports teams comprises four areas including greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf, floodlights and water desalination equipment in areas facing water salinity. Bank Muscat's Green Sports programme has so far benefitted 183 teams with over 50,000 team members across Oman.

RAJA YOGA CENTRE FOR SELF DEVELOPMENT

## Event to be held on January 11 to commemorate Oman Environment Day

**MUSCAT:** On the occasion of Oman's Environment Day which falls on January 8, a big event has been organised by Raja Yoga Centre for Self Development Oman on the auspicious day of the Accession Day on Thursday, January 11, 2024, from 7pm to 8.30 pm at the Jenan Ball Room of Fraser Suites (Panorama Mall, Al Ghubra). The world-renowned motivational leader, BK Shivani, is set to grace the vibrant city of Muscat with her presence in an enlightening public event titled "Let Us Heal Our World." The world is passing through turmoil currently with many upheavals happening around the world. So, the speech

on the special topic of healing our world has great importance in today's situation, which aims to foster protection of the environment, individual growth, well-being, and community healing. Shivani is a globally acclaimed speaker, author, and spiritual guide known for her profound insights into human nature and spirituality. Her ability to blend ancient wisdom with contemporary issues has garnered her a massive following worldwide. She has been a guiding light for millions, inspiring them to lead a more meaningful and purposeful life. She is the most sought-after speaker with millions of followers on YouTube.

Shivani is a dedicated practitioner of Raja Yoga meditation, which she incorporates into her teachings to bring about positive transformation in individuals and communities. With a background in engineering and an innate curiosity about the deeper aspects of life, Sister Shivani embarked on a spiritual journey that led her to the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. Over the years, Shivani has become a household name through her television series, online videos, and live events. Her ability to simplify complex concepts and make them accessible to people from all walks of life has contributed to her

widespread popularity. Shivani's teachings emphasize the power of positive thinking, meditation, and the importance of nurturing one's inner self to create a harmonious and joyful life. Raja Yoga Center for Self Development Oman is a leading organisation committed to empowering individuals with tools for self-discovery, individual growth, and personal development. **Positive impact** Through various programmes, workshops, and community initiatives, the organisation strives to create a positive impact on society by promoting wellness,

inner peace and harmony. In addition to organising transformative events like "Let Us Heal Our World," the Raja Yoga Center for Self Development actively engages in community outreach programs, partnering with local organizations to address social issues and contribute to the overall well-being of the community. The event promises to be a unique opportunity for Muscat residents to experience the profound teachings of Shivani and gain valuable insights into the journey of self-discovery and healing. Let us rise on the occasion, develop our inner quality, and make changes to our thought quality for

the benefit of every individual so that we build a vibrant community around the globe and let us protect the environment and heal the world. Due to the popularity of the Speaker and to avoid the rush, it is requested that the individuals who are interested in attending the event may register at the website - [www.rajayogaoman.org](http://www.rajayogaoman.org), [www.instagram.com/rajayogamuscat](http://www.instagram.com/rajayogamuscat), [www.facebook.com/rajayogamuscat](http://www.facebook.com/rajayogamuscat), email: [rajayogamuscat@gmail.com](mailto:rajayogamuscat@gmail.com) or contact 79592245,92040255. Event schedule -January 11 from 7pm to 8.30pm. Venue: Jenan Ballroom, Fraser Suites, Panorama Mall, Al Ghubra.





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